



Writing Strategies

7 questions	18 questions	20 questions	12 questions	15 questions	1 question
Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development	Reading Compre- hension	Literary Response and Analysis	Writing Strategies	Written and Oral English Language Conventions	Writing Applications

A strategy is a plan or procedure for achieving some end, and the end is a coherent and focused essay. The CAHSEE is designed to assess how well students are able to use learned strategies to write essays that convey clear and distinctive perspectives on a subject, present a reasoned argument, and maintain a consistent tone and focus.

In the Classroom

When students write, they put together facts and ideas and create something new. By grades 9 and 10, students should be able to create multi-paragraph essays using a variety of effective and coherent organizational patterns. Additionally, students are expected to know how to document support of statements and assertions from the text in a polished and sophisticated way. Writing is a skill that can be learned, and this strand offers a window on how well a student is progressing in developing this skill.

Students should be able to:

- Guide the reader through the essay by providing:
 - A subject and focus
 - A thesis that lets the reader know clearly what the single, generalized statement is that drives the entire essay
 - Paragraphing or chunking that helps the reader know when a sequence of related sentences begins and ends. The use of paragraphs signals a reader when to stop holding a meaning in suspension
 - Transitions or bridges that connect paragraphs and sentences that help the reader anticipate how the next paragraph or sentence will affect the meaning of what has just been read

- Ensure that their writing “flows”—that ideas and information hang together with no major gaps, holes, or sidesteps
- “Labor” over their work. Elaboration has the word “labor” in it for good reason. Good writing is full of carefully chosen specific details, precise language, action verbs, and sensory details
- Provide appropriate evidence that synthesizes information from multiple sources and employs strategies for developing generalizations

On the CAHSEE

To demonstrate achievement, students must understand how coherence and sound organizational structure are achieved in expository writing. Students must also be able to recognize ways to revise text to improve coherence and structure. Questions will require students to identify ways to organize text, the best sequence of ideas in a text, and appropriate beginnings for paragraphs or essays and endings for paragraphs or essays. In addition, students should understand the importance of providing evidence in support of ideas and assertions. Questions require students to identify content that does or does not support main ideas or topic sentences. Questions also may require students to identify assertions that are or are not supported by evidence. The CAHSEE questions that focus on revision are based on essays and reports that represent rough drafts of student writing.

Students must also recognize the appropriate use of language in written text. Questions in Writing Strategies require students to identify the best way to express an idea, ways to create interest and variety, the appropriate placement and use of modifiers, and the use of active rather than passive voice. In addition, questions require students to recognize the precise use of words, the best way to revise an ungrammatical or awkwardly written phrase or sentence, and appropriate ways to address a specific writing task in terms of purpose, audience, and formality. The questions that focus on language use and revision of phrases and sentences are based on essays and reports that represent student rough drafts.

CAHSEE questions also focus on research skills. Students are asked to recognize the characteristics of various research sources and to evaluate the usefulness of sources for a specific task. Sources with which students should be familiar include almanacs, news sources, speeches, journals, technical documents, and the Internet.

The following pages discuss the five academic content standards in Writing Strategies.

Writing Strategies

Standard **10WS1.1**
Establish a controlling impression or coherent thesis that conveys a clear and distinctive perspective on the subject and maintain a consistent tone and focus throughout the piece of writing.

3 test questions

Which of the following sentences, if inserted before sentence 1, would make the MOST effective opening sentence?

- A** Writing an essay is easy if one uses a computer.
- B** Good essays are always written in black pen.
- C** Any student can write a successful essay.
- D** Teachers sometimes assign difficult essays.

CAHSEE questions in this standard require students to demonstrate understanding of coherence of subject and tone in written text. Questions may ask students to identify content that is not closely related to the rest of a passage, to determine the best way to organize text, to identify the appropriate sequence of ideas in a text, or to recognize the best way to begin or end a paragraph. Questions are based on passages that represent rough drafts of typical student writing.

The sample question is based on the passage “Essay Writing,” which is reproduced on page 92 in Appendix B of this guide. The question requires students to identify a topic sentence that is appropriate to the passage. Before attempting to answer the question, students should read the entire passage and determine its focus. Because the passage consists of guidelines for composing an effective essay, choices A and B, which are statements about the mechanics of writing (use of computer or pen), are not well related to the main idea. Choice D is incorrect because the passage is not about the difficulty of writing but about ways to write effectively. Choice C is the correct response because it would begin the passage with the concept of writing successfully, which is the primary focus of the passage.

<p style="text-align: center;">Writing Strategies</p> <p>Standard 10WS1.2 Use precise language, action verbs, sensory details, appropriate modifiers, and the active rather than the passive voice.</p> <p>3 test questions</p>	<p>Which of the following words is the BEST way to express the meaning of the word <i>thing</i> in sentence 1?</p> <p>A object</p> <p>B item</p> <p>C creature</p> <p>D article</p>
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CAHSEE questions for this standard require students to understand the appropriate use of language in written text. Students may be asked to identify the best way to express an idea, the best way to use words to create interest and variety in a given situation, the appropriate placement and use of modifiers, and the correct use of active voice. Questions are based on passages that represent rough drafts of typical student writing.

The sample question is based on the passage “The Abominable Snowman,” which is reproduced on page 93 in Appendix B of this guide. This question requires students to recognize that the word *thing* lacks interest and precision for the purpose of the sentence in which it has been used. Choice C is the correct answer, as it is the best description of the Abominable Snowman. Students should recognize that choices A, B, and D are used to describe inanimate things and thus lack precision when used to refer to a living being.

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Standard **10WS1.4**
Develop the main ideas within the body of the composition through supporting evidence (e.g., scenarios, commonly held beliefs, hypotheses, definitions).

2 test questions

Which of the following ideas is supported by details or evidence in the essay?

- A** The world will never believe in the existence of the Yeti.
- B** Yeti sightings cannot be explained by overactive imaginations.
- C** A bear walking on its hind legs can appear to be a Yeti.
- D** All mountain guides believe in the Yeti.

CAHSEE questions for this standard require students to understand relationships between assertions and support. The types of support addressed in the questions for this standard include facts, examples, quotations, opinions from authorities, comparisons, scenarios, commonly held beliefs, hypotheses, and definitions. Students may be asked to recognize content that directly supports a given main idea, argument, or position, the best support for a given generalization, or a general statement for which details or evidence are not provided in the text. Questions are based on passages that represent rough drafts of typical student writing.

The sample question is based on the passage “The Abominable Snowman,” which is reproduced on page 93 in Appendix B of this guide. The question requires students to analyze the passage to determine which ideas are supported by textual evidence. Choice C, the assertion that a bear on its hind legs may appear to be a Yeti, is the correct response. The text provides several details in support of this assertion, including the fact that bears are able to walk on their hind legs, that scientists have determined that Yeti footprints are probably bear prints, and that three of five recent Yeti sightings were determined to be bears. Choice A, the assertion that the world will never believe that the Yeti exist, overstates the information in the first part of sentence 15, and students should recognize that there are no details in the text that support this assertion. In fact, the second part of sentence 15 leaves open the possibility that the world might believe in the Yeti when given sufficient proof. Choice B repeats information in sentences 13 and 14, that the Yeti cannot be the product of overactive imaginations. Although there are sentences in the text that are sympathetic to this viewpoint, the text does not provide details or evidence to support it. In fact, sentence 3 states that “doubts still remain” about the existence of the Yeti, and the final sentence echoes this idea. Choice D, an assertion that all mountain guides believe in the Yeti, overstates information in sentences 13 and 14, and there is no evidence in the text to support this broad generalization.

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<p>Standard 10WS1.5 Synthesize information from multiple sources and identify complexities and discrepancies in the information and the different perspectives found in each medium (e.g., almanacs, microfiche, news sources, in-depth field studies, speeches, journals, technical documents).</p> <p>1 test question</p>	<p>Based on the essay, which of the following would be the BEST source of information to demonstrate that the Yeti most likely does NOT exist?</p> <p>A a book of Nepalese legends which contains stories about the Yeti</p> <p>B a documentary about the Yeti containing interviews with Yeti believers</p> <p>C a poster which has pictures of all known Himalayan mammals</p> <p>D a magazine article which demonstrates the falsehood of all supposed Yeti sightings</p>

CAHSEE questions for this standard require students to identify and compare the characteristics of almanacs, news sources, speeches, journals, technical documents, and the Internet. Questions may also require students to understand the characteristics of sources that make them best for a particular use (e.g., journals for in-depth treatment; the Internet for immediate data; the editorial page for opinions). Some items may require students to compare the quality or usefulness of information from more than one source. Questions are based on passages that represent rough drafts of typical student writing.

The sample question is based on the passage “The Abominable Snowman,” which is reproduced on page 93 in Appendix B of this guide. The question requires students to identify research sources best suited for the purpose stated in the question. The four answer choices represent sources a student might encounter in doing research on the Yeti, and students must evaluate and compare the sources to determine which one is most likely to be suitable for the purpose. Selecting the correct response also requires students to comprehend the main ideas of the passage. Choices A and B are not appropriate to the purpose because they are likely to support the possibility that the Yeti do exist. Choice C will not be appropriate because it will not include creatures whose existence is in doubt. Choice D is directly related to the research purpose and is the correct response.

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Standard **10WS1.9**
Revise writing to improve the logic and coherence of the organization and controlling perspective, the precision of word choice, and the tone by taking into consideration the audience, purpose, and formality of the context.

3 test questions

Which is the MOST effective substitution for the underlined part of sentence 5?

- A** and ridding of errors in grammar and mechanics
- B** to get rid of errors in grammar and mechanics
- C** and getting rid of errors in grammar and mechanics
- D** Leave as is.

The focus of standard 10WS1.9 on the CAHSEE is revision. Students are asked to revise individual sentences or phrases as they appear within drafts of typical student writing. Questions require students to identify the revision of a sentence or phrase that results in the most precise use of words or the most appropriate or correct way to state an idea. Questions may also require students to recognize elements of a passage that contribute to the consistency of its tone.

The sample question is based on the passage “Essay Writing,” which is reproduced on page 92 in Appendix B of this guide. The question offers four versions of a sentence in the passage, and students must choose the one that is most effective. The version presented within the passage (choice D) is flawed because of its use of passive voice and the awkward construction ending the sentence: “can be got rid of.” Choices A and C are not correctly linked to the rest of the sentence, as they introduce a compound construction with “and” but are not parallel in structure to the infinitive phrase “to revise.” Choice B, the correct response, provides the simplest and most precise revision needed to express the idea.